MARVEL LIMITED SERIES

PSR 4 of 6

MILLIGAN

ROBERTSON

RAMOS

TOXIN™

SON OF CARNAGE!

THE NEW AVENGERS TIE-IN

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I doubt if anyone really knew for sure what happened to the 5:15 downtown train.

SKREEEEEEEEEE

It was his first "jumper" and he wondered what it'd mean. Years of trauma counselling? Lawsuits? Daytime television?

The driver shut his eyes and instinctively slammed on the brakes.

The lady turned her face away. She didn't want to see all that mangled flesh and spurting blood.

She gets plenty of that kind of thing with her children.

The two lovers only saw each other.

Or rather, they only saw what their lovesick eyes wanted to see.

The professional saw only the opportunity.

This wasn't about the money. A wallet displayed so brazenly demands to be taken.

The man clutching the Wall Street Journal like a prayer mat only saw his secretary, who he'll be making another pass at later today.

Wall Street

Of course, I'm imagining all this. I don't know what's going on inside anyone's head.

I hardly know what's happening inside my own poor aching skull.

THE HELL YOU PLAYING AT, TOXIN? THAT WAS MEANT TO BE *SUICIDE*.

A PITIFUL CRY FOR HELP, WHICH LUCKILY I HEARD, JUST IN TIME...

WHAT ABOUT RAZOR-FIST? YOU PROMISED SPIDER-MAN YOU'D BRING HIM TO JUSTICE. HOW'RE YOU GONNA DO THAT IF YOU'RE DEAD?

ANOTHER SUPER-HERO TYPE WILL TAKE MY PLACE.

THE ANSWER WAS RIGHT. SUICIDE'S MY ONLY... ANSWER.

AREN'T YOU CATHOLICS SUPPOSED TO HAVE A THING ABOUT THAT?

I'M HARDLY A CATHOLIC ANYMORE. WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST LET ME DIE?

BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO, NOT AT THE END. I FELT IT. YOU WANTED TO LIVE.

FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR BABY BOY, EDWARD...

DON'T MENTION HIM.

AND YOU THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR OLD MAN. WHAT WOULD HE SAY IF HE KNEW HIS SON WAS TAKING THE COWARDLY WAY OUT?

COWARDLY? IT TAKES GUTS TO JUMP IN FRONT OF A TRAIN.

SAVE TOBY

IT TAKES MORE GUTS NOT TO JUMP IN FRONT OF A TRAIN.

YOU WEREN'T THINKING STRAIGHT. YOU DID A VERY STUPID THING, AND I WAS QUICK ENOUGH TO SAVE US BOTH.

I'M STILL WAITING FOR A LITTLE GRATITUDE.

YOU SAID... SAVE US *BOTH*. YOU MEAN...IF *I'D* DIED...*YOU'D* HAVE DIED TOO?

N-NO! IT WAS JUST A FIGURE OF SPEECH.

WHY ELSE WOULD YOU SAVE ME? IT'S NOT AS THOUGH YOU *LIKE* ME.

PIZZ

YOU'RE STILL YOUNG. STILL LEARNING WHAT IT IS TO BE A SYMBIOTE.

MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ZIP OFF AND FIND ANOTHER HOST IF SOMETHING *HAPPENS* TO ME.

I CAN ZIP OFF WHENEVER THE HELL I LIKE, BUSTER!

OR MAYBE YOU'RE *DEPENDENT* UPON ME. AND THAT SCARES THE BEJESUS OUTTA YOU!

YOU'RE CRAZY...

I DON'T THINK SO. I THINK YOU *CAN'T* LET ME DIE. AND THAT MAKES THINGS INTERESTING.

DOOP LIVES

VERY INTERESTING...

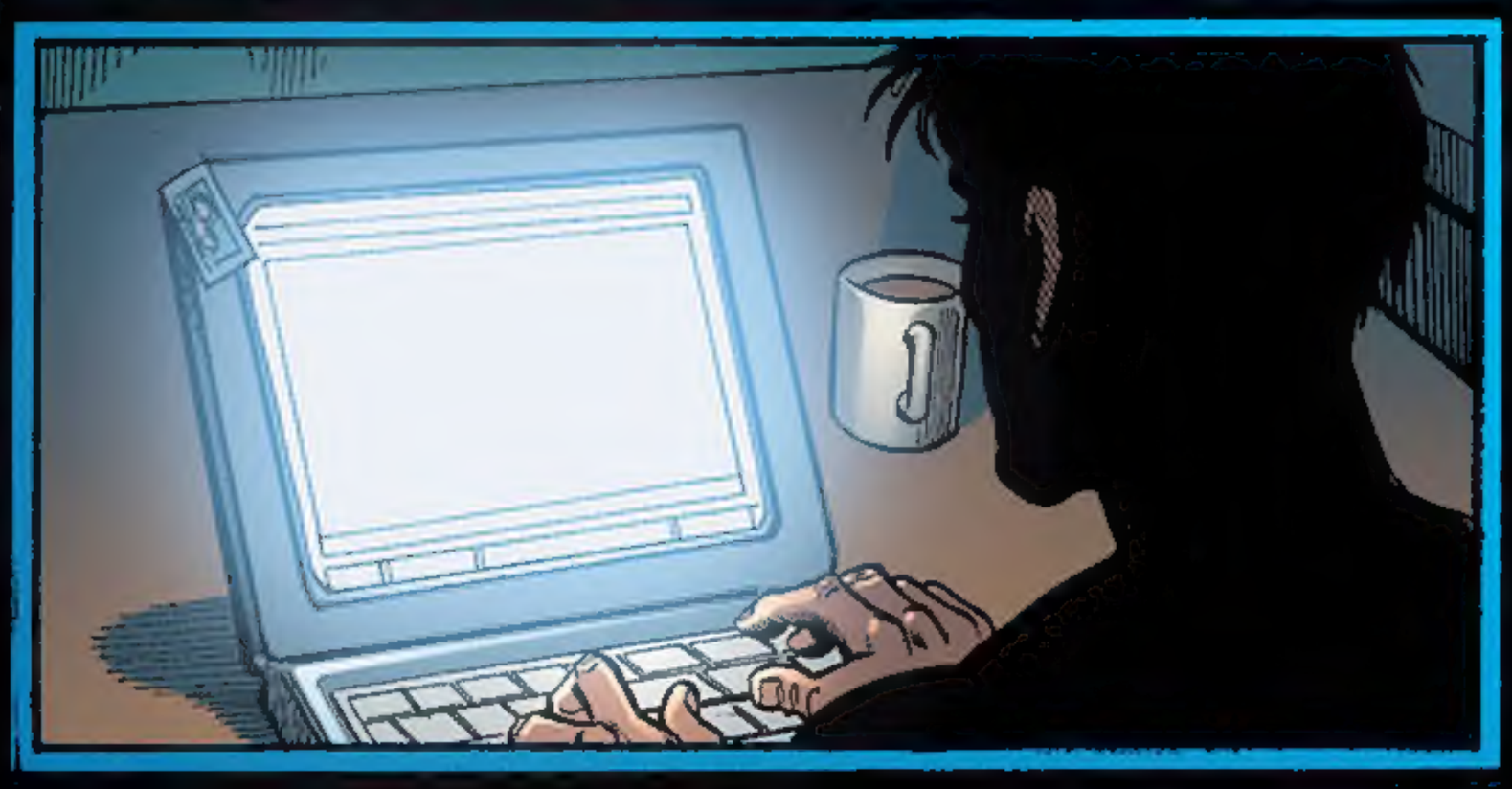
DOOP

It's interesting. Now I've started writing this Toxin Diary, I wish I'd done it from the beginning.

It helps me get my thoughts in some kind of order.

And there's another unforeseen upside. The stillness, the monotony of composing this thing seems to send the monster inside me to sleep.

Maybe it acts like those soft lullabies I used to sing to Eddie. The same ones my dad sang to me in that rough sandpaper voice of his.



I have discovered that Toxin might have a weakness. He needs me to go on living. At least, he thinks he does.

I don't know how I can use this to my advantage yet, but who knows? Ever since this nightmare began, things have just gotten worse and worse.

Maybe this is a sign that things are going to get better.

Is it too much to hope for?

TOXIN: the Devil You Know

PART FOUR: WALKING MAN

YO, WRECKER, GET A LOAD OF THE JUNK THAT PASSES FOR *ART* IN THIS DUMP.

MoMA

IT'S *MODERN* ART, DRIVER. YOU AIN'T MEANT TO *LIKE* IT.

NOW MAKE SURE THAT JELLY'S PACKED IN REAL TIGHT.

LIKE, WHAT'S *THIS? WALKING MAN,* BY SOME DUDE CALLED *GIACOMETTI.* IT DON'T LOOK LIKE A MAN.

AND IT SURE AIN'T WALKING.

REMINDS ME OF A GIRL I DATED. ONE NIGHT I TOLD HER SHE WALKED LIKE A GUY.

WHAT DID SHE DO?

WALKED OUT ON ME.

GUESS SOME CHICKS JUST CAN'T TAKE THE TRUTH.

WHOA! YOU SEEN WHAT THESE PEOPLE ARE CHARGING FOR *TICKETS?*

I KNOW. AND THEY CALL *US* CRIMINALS.

MoMA
FALL EVENTS

WRECKER, I'VE BEEN THINKING...

CAREFUL, CALUSKY.

WHY DON'T WE JUST RUN OFF WITH SOME OF THIS SO-CALLED ART?

BECAUSE WE CAME HERE TO FIND MY SUBSTITUTE *CROWBAR*, AN' MY PALS IN THE NEW YORK CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS ASSURE ME IT'S SAFELY BURIED IN THESE FOUNDATIONS...

ANDRE

ANYWAY, ART THEFT IS A VERY SPECIALIZED FIELD. YA GOTTA HAVE CONTACTS. SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE...

IN OTHER WORDS, WE'D NEED A LITTLE MORE THAN A SUPER-POWERED CROWBAR AND A PAIR OF GIANT FISTS TO BREAK INTO THIS WORLD...

JIM, I GOTTA WORK. YOU REMEMBER *POLICE WORK?* CATCHING BAD GUYS AND STUFF?

THE IDEA IS TO MAKE THE CITY A BETTER PLACE, RIGHT?

POLICE

NYPD

Courtesy Pro Respect

UH, YEAH...

ONE QUICK WAY YOU COULD MAKE IT *MUCH* BETTER IS BY GIVING ME THE ADDRESS WHERE MY GODDAMN SON IS STAYING!

WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS. I CAN'T DO THAT. I PROMISED PAT.

DO IT FOR GINA AND EDDIE. DON'T YOU THINK *THEY* DESERVE A LITTLE *SERVICE* AND *PROTECTION?*

IF I COULD JUST TELL GINA I'D SEEN PAT, MAYBE IT'D STOP HER HEART BREAKING A LITTLE...

JIM, THIS IS EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL--

OF COURSE IT IS. NOW WRITE AN ADDRESS ON THE BACK OF THAT PHOTO AN' I'LL GET OUTTA YOUR LIFE.

NYPD

CALLING ALL CARS...

...A MAJOR DISTURBANCE AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN--

THE SIRENS ARE GETTING CLOSER, MAN.

I'M *REALLY* NOT INTO SEEING THE *FREE MOTEL* AGAIN SO CAN WE PLEASE GO NOW, PLEASE?

SOON, DRIVER. SOON.

As soon as I get the hang of this, I'm going to write Gina a letter. A long letter. One that will explain everything.

I'll tell her how I miss her and little Edward and every night say a prayer for them to the God I probably don't believe in any more.

DIARY - MICROSOFT WORD

And I'll tell them about Toxin. And maybe, just maybe she'll understand what can drive a man to walk out on everything he most loves in the world.

Maybe she'll understand how walking out on your wife and baby can seem the right thing to do. The only thing to do.

And then if I can keep Toxin under control I'll be able to bring down Razor-Fist. And I'll really start to turn this nightmare into something positive.

But I've got to keep Toxin thinking I'm about to commit suicide. That any moment I'm likely to put a gun to my head or throw myself out of the window.

If I can keep Toxin scared, maybe I'll be able to control him a little better...

PAT! HEY, PATRICK! YOU IN THERE, SON?

OH, NO.

I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE, SON! NOW OPEN UP!

GO AWAY, DAD, PLEASE.

WHATEVER IT IS, YOUR OLD MAN CAN HELP YOU!

NOT THIS TIME HE CAN'T.

SHOULDERED HEAVIER DOORS THAN *THIS* IN MY--

KRASH!

OW! MY ARM! THINK I DISLOCATED MY GODDAMN--

KEEP STILL. I'LL GET A SPLINT ON IT AND CALL AN AMBULANCE.

YOU'RE TOO OLD TO BE PULLING THESE STUNTS, DAD.

RUNNING AROUND AFTER YOU AND BUSTING MY SHOULDER WASN'T EXACTLY PART OF MY RETIREMENT PLAN.

HOW DID YOU FIND ME, ANYHOW?

HEY-OW-AH- AN OLD COP'S... STILL GOT HIS *SOURCES*...

I BET HE DOES...

MEADOWS!

ANY SIGN OF THAT BACKUP?

'FRAID NOT, SIR. SEEMS A LOT OF THE GUYS ARE OUT OF TOWN ON A "REALIZE YOUR POTENTIAL" TRAINING COURSE.

JUST SO LONG AS THEY'RE DOING SOMETHIN' *USEFUL.*

DAMN, WHERE'S THAT *SPIDER-MAN* THE ONE TIME YOU WANT HIM?

OH, I DON'T THINK WE'LL NEED ANY *SPANDEX* TONIGHT, SIR--

WHUP WHUP WHUP

THROW DOWN YOUR CROWBAR AND COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP AND MASKS OFF.

AND YOU CAN QUIT SMIRKING, TOO.

I TOLD YA WE SHOULDA HOOKED UP WITH *BULLDOZER* BEFORE DOIN' THIS--

WE DON'T NEED BULLDOZER. AND I WANT TO GIVE MY *NUMBER TWO STICK*--

--A DECENT WORKOUT!

WHA WHA

SKREEEEE

GOING DOWN! GOING--

OH, GOD.

KABOOM!

SIR?

SERGEANT FALK, SIR?

OMIGOD! SERGEANT FALK HAS BEEN IMPALED BY AN OLD *PAINTING*...

NOT JUST ANY OLD PAINTING. THAT'S PICASSO'S *LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON*. ONE OF THE KEY WORKS IN THE GENESIS OF MODERN ART.

THIS IS A *TRAGEDY*.

TRAGEDY? I'LL GIVE YOU TRAGEDY, YOU--

HELP! POLICE BRUTALITY! HELP!

C'MON, LEAVE HIM.

DEATH BY ART!

WITH FALK'S PROUD RECORD OF SERVICE, HE DESERVED A LITTLE BETTER THAN THAT!

I KNOW. A BULLET IN THE THROAT WOULD'VE BEEN SO MUCH NICER.

P-PAT? WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

GOT A VISIT FROM MY OLD MAN. YOU REMEMBER, THE ONE YOU SWORE YOU WOULDN'T GIVE MY ADDRESS TO.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A FRIEND. YOU WERE MY PARTNER. SOMEONE I TRUSTED WITH MY LIFE.

YOU'VE GOT YOUR PRIORITIES A LITTLE MIXED UP HERE, FELLA.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART HAS BEEN TRASHED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE WRECKING CREW. A NYPD HELICOPTER IS DOWN. GOD ALONE KNOWS HOW MANY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN HURT...

SERGEANT FALK HAS BEEN KILLED BY A PAINTING...

A PAINTING I DON'T EVEN *PRETEND* TO *UNDERSTAND*...

AND YOU'RE STILL BLEATING LIKE A SHEEP ABOUT YOUR *PROBLEMS*.

YOU SHOULD BE TRYING TO *HELP* US. YOU USED TO BE *A GOOD COP AND*--

OR DO YOU *ALWAYS* RUN AWAY WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH?

A...AH... AND...

P-PAT... I THINK I MIGHTA WET MYSELF.

LISTEN CAREFULLY. GO TO THE OFFICER IN COMMAND AND GET HIM TO PULL BACK HIS MEN.

I'M GOING INTO THE MUSEUM AND I DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE GETTING HURT.

S-SO *THIS* IS YOUR INFAMOUS *SYMBIOTE*. N-NICE SIX-PACK, PAL. NOT THAT SIX PACKS TURN ME ON OR ANYTHING.

I'LL TELL ALL THE GUYS DOWN AT THE *EMERALD SOCIETY* IT'S REALLY PAT MULLIGAN WHO WENT IN THERE.

THEY'LL BE PROUD'A YOU!

NO. I DON'T WANT ANYONE KNOWING MY NAME. IF THEY ASK... CALL ME *TOXIN.*

I-I-I GET IT. YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR *TRUE* IDENTITY A SECRET. JUST LIKE *SPIDER-MAN.*

AIN'T YOU GETTING A LITTLE *FULL* OF YOURSELF, PATSY?

JUST DO IT, MEADOWS.

THOUGHT YOU SAID WE AIN'T CUT OUT TO BE ART THIEVES, WRECKER.

THIS STUFF'S OUR TICKET TO OUTTAHERE-VILLE. WE COLLECT THE PRICIEST BITS WE CAN FIND.

HOW CAN PEOPLE LIKE US FIGURE OUT THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF A PIECE OF ART?

WE LOOK IN THE PROGRAM. COME ON. WANNA CHECK OUT THE IMPRESSIONISTS.

OKAY, MEADOWS. I'LL GIVE HIM FIFTEEN MINUTES. THEN I'M GOING TO SMOKE THOSE FREAKS OUT.

WHAT'S IT *DOING* ANYHOW?

"JUST *STANDING* THERE."

I GET NO THANKS FOR SAVING YOUR SKIN, WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU NOW?

YOU'LL BE HELPING THE POLICE FORCE. NEW YORK CITY. THE WORLD OF *CULTURE*.

I'M SORRY; THAT DOESN'T GET ME EXCITED.

WRECKER AND PILEDRIVER ARE USING THE *MASTERPIECES* AS *HOSTAGES*. THEY GET A CLEAR EXIT...OR STARRY NIGHT AND CO. GETS TRASHED.

WHICH IS WHY IT'S WORTH GIVING PAT--I MEAN *TOXIN*-- A SHOT.

SORRY, MEADOWS. *TOXIN*, YOU SAY HE CALLS HIMSELF? GOT A BAD SMELL ABOUT IT, THAT'S FOR--

LOOK, SIR! LOOK!

"HE'S GONE."

KINDA OUTTA PLACE WIT' THE IMPRESSIONISTS, WOULDN'T YA SAY, DRIVER?

MORE LIKE THE LATER, MORE MATURE WORK OF THAT *WALKING MAN* DUDE. *JACKO METTI*.

LOOK AT THE INCREDIBLE WORKMANSHIP!

NOW *THIS* IS THE KINDA ART I COULD REALLY DIG—

KK--KK!

YOU AIN'T A PIECE OF ART?

NO. I'M NOT A PIECE OF ART.

KK--KKK--!!!

H-HIT HIM!

I don't kid myself that everything's suddenly perfect.

SMKKK!

Oh, I know I used the suicide thing to get Toxin to help me with Wrecker and Piledriver.

And I'd be a liar if I said I didn't enjoy inflicting pain on those thugs.

Of course I didn't let Toxin go too far...

But it was nice not to be too held back by the legal and moral constraints of being a police officer...

And afterwards some of them cheered me. My ex-colleagues. The best people in the world.

They cheered me.

Be careful, Pat. You might start liking this.

I know I can't pretend to be suicidal forever.

Especially now that I have a new arrangement with Toxin.

NEW YORK

The idea came to me two days after the MoMA thing. I was back at my usual spot, watching Gina take Eddie to the park.

I wanted so badly to talk to her. To be close to her.

Then I realized I could. With a little help.

PLEASE, IT WOULD...MAYBE IT WOULD MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING.

O-KAY. BUT IF I DO THIS, WE'LL HAVE NO MORE TALK OF SUICIDE.

The second time she saw the pleasant, rather sad-looking guy on the bench, she gave him a smile.

And I smiled back. My heart almost burst.

Then she put Edward on the grass. And he started to take a few faltering steps. I couldn't believe it. My little boy.

My baby.

MY LITTLE WALKING MAN.

HEY, PATRICK. YOU SEEM HAPPY.

I AM. KINDA. THAT DOESN'T MEAN I LIKE HAVING YOU AS A BODYGUEST.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT I'M DOING FOR YOU.

AND I'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT YOU SHOULD GIVE ME SOMETHING BACK IN RETURN.

I SHOULD TELL HIM TO GO TO HELL.

BUT HE'S GOT ME. HE KNOWS HE'S GOT ME.

HE KNOWS I'LL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP ON SEEING GINA AND EDDIE.

HE KNOWS I'LL MAKE A PACT WITH HIM. WITH THE CHILDISH, ALIEN, VERY POSSIBLY EVIL DEVIL INSIDE ME.

HE KNOWS...

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XIII

The Hand

E E M P I R